



News Release

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Penn Cove shellfish harvest area closed due to fuel spill

Commercial and recreational areas closed temporarily

OLYMPIA — The state Department of Health temporarily closed Penn Cove to all shellfish harvesting due to a diesel spill from the fishing boat FV Deep Sea, which burned and sank Sunday, May 13. Penn Cove is located next to Whidbey Island in Island County.

Penn Cove Shellfish, the area's major commercial shellfish operation, voluntarily stopped harvesting on Sunday before any diesel reached its shellfish. Since then, a much larger volume of diesel spilled from the boat, producing a visible fuel sheen over the commercial operation.

All commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting in Penn Cove is closed immediately. The state Department of Health will test shellfish to confirm that they're safe to eat before reopening the area to harvest.

"We appreciate the quick action Penn Cove Shellfish took to suspend its shellfish harvest," said Jerrod Davis, director of the Office of Shellfish and Water Protection. "I'm pleased to see the shellfish industry coming together quickly with local, state, and federal agencies to respond."

When oil spills occur, filter-feeding shellfish like clams and oysters can collect contaminants. In time, contaminants from the spill will be filtered out by the shellfish during their normal feeding.

The Department of Health is responsible for the safety of commercial shellfish harvested in the state. The department works with other state and local agencies to protect public health by closing shellfish harvest areas that are subject to pollution events such as oil spills.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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